



Top Tips



Community consultation and engagement

People



This guide will be useful for: organisations who want to ensure they are developing the best possible proposal to match the needs of the communities they serve.

What you want to achieve:

A menu of different engagement activities is tested, generating invaluable feedback for your organisation and a greater sense of 'ownership' by key stakeholders such as your organisation's beneficiaries. ✓

What you'll need:

A budget for engagement activities ✓

Time to plan and deliver a range of engagement activities ✓

Clear sense of purpose about what you are 'engaging' for ✓

How you'll do it:

- Think about any consultation as part of an ongoing **community engagement strategy**. Community engagement works best where it is an ongoing cumulative process which **supports the development of positive working relationships and trust over time**. It is a long-term strategy not a quick fix.
- Individual consultation and engagement events should be planned and designed with this in mind, and aim to contribute to the overall aims of the engagement process. Consider developing a **community consultation and engagement plan** detailing opportunities to participate and deadlines.

- Start with developing some clear and unambiguous objectives for the community consultation and engagement. **What is the scope and purpose?**
- **Agreeing a clear purpose will help identify engagement objectives, anticipated outcomes, and help to determine the scope and depth of the engagement.** This can range from consultation to involvement to decision-making through to community and voluntary groups delivering projects and services.
- **Consider appropriate and inclusive community consultation and engagement methods.** Methods may include: local media campaigns; leaflets; posters; exhibitions / stands at community events; surveys by post or door-to-door or online; newsletter and email updates; storytelling activities; workshops; focus groups; public meetings; community visioning / maps and models.
- Effective publicity is needed to ensure all groups, including those considered **'hard-to-reach', who actually just need more support and imaginative ways of engagement,** have the information needed to participate.
- **When considering how to overcome barriers to engagement, think about the techniques and methods you use,** the location and accessibility of the venue, the type of engagement events, the format and content of any communication and publicity materials, as well as the need for outreach activities to ensure people have an opportunity to participate.
- Will you monitor and evaluate the success of each mechanism used, to help when planning future engagement activities? This can be useful in determining which activities generate a good outcome and **where to focus your efforts in future.**
- Think about how to **value the process** as well as the products of engagement – **establish a real sense of participation, giving people tangible ways to contribute their views, such as setting up 'washing lines' where people can 'peg' their comments, encouraging new people to get involved by providing a convivial setting (often with coffee and cake) in an easily accessible venue, inspire new thinking by offering practical activities, such as contributing to 'ideas scrapbooks'.** Try to think of ways to make sessions as little like conventional stakeholder engagement events as possible.
- **Community mapping** can be a useful tool e.g. can use maps and photos of an area or specific location to illustrate how people view their area, what they like or dislike, and improvements they would like to see. Ideas can be generated in small group discussions and recorded on post-it notes or comment cards. Facilitators can help people explore issues, build consensus, or identify areas of conflict. A variety of aspects can be mapped **including land use, community assets, facilities, and transport options to develop a snapshot of an area.**

Connecting Communities in Wales

This top tips guide was put together as part of the Connecting Communities in Wales project run by the Community Transport Association. The project is funded through the Welsh Government Rural Communities Rural Development Programme 2014-2020, which is funded by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development and the Welsh Government, and aims to support community transport in Wales through creating new partnerships, bringing funding into the sector and creating new transport networks.

Find out more at ctauk.org/cciw